

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10033

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS: MEETING WITH BITSIOS

1. DURING THE COURSE OF MY LONG PRIVATE CONVERSATION
LAST NIGHT WITH FONMIN BITSIOS (SEPTTEL), HE ALSO TOLD ME OF
HIS DISCUSSION WITH CAGLAYANGIL IN BRUSSELS ON SEVERAL
BILATERAL GREEK-TURKISH MATTERS.

2. AIR SPACE. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE AND CAGLAYANGIL DID
NOT SPEND MUCH TIME ON THE AIR SPACE QUESTION BUT DID
AGREE THAT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WOULD RESUME NEGOTIATIONS
ON THIS SUBJECT SOON. HE SAID THAT A MAJOR STICKING
POINT CONTINUED TO BE THE TURKISH DESIRE FOR WHAT THE
GREEKS CONSIDER EXCESSIVE AND UNWARRANTED NOTIFICATION
CONCERNING GREEK MILITARY FLIGHTS TO GREEK ISLANDS IN
THE EASTERN AEGEAN. HE SAID ONE OF CAGLAYANGIL'S ADVISERS
HAD SURFACED AGAIN IN THER BRUSSELS MEETING THE TURKISH
DESIRE TO BE NOTIFIED OF SUCH FLIGHTS WHEN THE AIRCRAFT
PASSED A QTE MID-LINE UNQTE IN THE AEGEAN FLYING IN AN
EASTERLY DIRECTION. BITSIOS SAID THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY
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ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF A LONG-STANDING TURKISH STRA-

TEGIC OBJECTIVE OF TRYING TO DIVIDE THE AEGEAN DOWN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY. BITSIOS SAID HE TOLD CAGLAYANGIL THAT THAT WAS OUT AND THAT GREECE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO ANY SUCH NOTIFICATION. BITSIOS SAID THEY DECIDED TO REASSIGN THIS SUBJECT TO THEIR RESPECTIVE REPRESENTATIVES AND NEGOTIATORS AND TO SET A DATE SOON -- PROBABLY EARLY NEXT YEAR -- TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

3. CONTINENTAL SHELF. BITSIOS SAID HE AND CAGLAYANGIL HAD HAD A SOMEWHAT LONGER DISCUSSION IN BRUSSELS OF THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND THE NEXT STEPS FOR SUBMISSION OF THEIR DESPUTE TO THE WORLD COURT. BITSIOS SAID HE TOLD CAGLAYANGIL QUITE FORTHRIGHTLY THAT THE GOG DID NOT APPRECIATE THE LAST TURKISH NOTE ON THIS SUBJECT OF A FEW WEEKS AGO WHICH HAD BEEN RELEASED TO THE PRESS IN ANKARA EVEN BEFORE IT HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE GOG. THAT WAS HARDLY THE APPROACH OR THE SPIRIT TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THIS COMPLEX AND IMPORTANT ISSUE. BITSIOS SAID CAGLAYANGIL CONTINUED TO ARGUE FOR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH REPRESENTATIVES TO TRY AND SETTLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THE DISPUTE WITHOUT RECOURSE TO THE WORLD COURT, LEAVING ONLY UNRESOLVED POINTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COURT. BITSIOS' POSITION CONTINUED TO BE THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS SHOULD SUBMIT THE DISPUTE TO THE WORLD COURT SINCE THE BASIC QUESTION -- ON WHICH THEY OBVIOUSLY COULD NEVER AGREE BY THEMSELVES -- WAS THE QTE DELIMITATION UNQTE OF THE SHELF IN THE AEGEAN. THEREFORE, BITSIOS HAD SAID TO CAGLAYANGIL IN BRUSSELS THAT THE ONLY THING TO BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WAS THE TEXT OF THEIR QTE COMPROMIS UNQTE WHICH THEY WOULD JOINTLY SUBMIT TO THE COURT, AS HAD BEEN AGREED EARLIER THIS YEAR. CAGLAYANGIL THEN REQUESTED BITSIOS TO RECONSIDER THE TURKISH PROPOSAL MOST CAREFULLY AND SEE WHETHER HERE MIGHT NOT BE SOME GIVE IN THE GREEK POSITION. AS A RESULT, AND AFTER FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE GOG AND WITH ITS LEGAL ADVISERS, BOTH GREEK AND FOREIGN, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD NOW DRAFTED A NEW NOTE ON THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT WHICH IT WOULD BE TRANSMITTING TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. BITSIOS GOT OUT A COPY OF THE DRAFT NOTE IN FRENCH AND WENT OVER IT WITH ME. THE NOTE REPLIES TO THE TURKISH NOTE ON THIS SUBJECT OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AND CONTAINS A LONG RESTATEMENT OF THE BASIC GOG POSITION. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE SPECIALLY IMPORTANT PARAGRAPH AND A NEW

POINT IN IT. THIS PARAGRAPH REPRESENTS ADDITIONAL FLEX-
ABILITY IN THE GOG POSITION AND WAS AS FAR AS GREECE WAS
PREPARED TO GO, BITSIOS SAID. THE ESSENCE OF THE PARA-
GRAPH IS THAT QTE SINCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE REQUIRED UNQTE
BETWEEN THE GOG AND GOT REPRESENTATIVES TO DRAFT
THE QTE COMPROMIS UNQTE, IF DURING THE COURSE OF SUCH
NEGOTIATIONS THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MAKE
PROPOSALS THAT MIGHT ELIMINATE SOME OF THE POINTS OF
DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THOSE PROPOSALS
WOULD BE QTE MOST CAREFULLY CONSIDERED UNQTE BY THE GOG.

5. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE HAD INDICATED TO CAGLAYANGIL
IN BRUSSELS THAT THE LATTER COULD EXPECT THIS NOTE
FROM THE GOG IN THE NEAR FUTURE,
AND CAGLAYANGIL HAD AGREED TO STUDY THE GREEK NOTE WITH GREAT CARE
AND
REPLY TO IT PROMPTLY. BITSIOS SAID HE AND CAGLAYANGIL
HAD ALSO AGREED THAT NEITHER GOVERNMENT WOULD RELEASE
SUCH NOTES FOR PUBLICATION IN THE FUTURE.

6. I ASKED BITSIOS IF THE QUESTION OF QTE OTHER PRO-
BLEMS IN THE AEGEAN UNQTE WHICH CAGLAYANGIL HAD REFERRED
TO IN HIS STATEMENT OF DECEMBER 5 (PROBABLY MEANING
GREEK MILITARIZATION OF ISLANDS) HAD COME UP, AND BITSIOS
SAID THAT IT HAD NOT. IN RESPONSE TO MY INQUIRY, BITSIOS
ALSO SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF QTE MINORITIES UNQTE -- ALSO
EARLIER REFERRED TO PUBLICLY BY CAGLAYANGIL -- HAD NOT
COME UP EITHER.

7. COMMENT: BITSIOS WAS ALSO SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY
HIS DISCUSSION OF THESE BILATERAL POINTS WITH CAGLAYANGIL,
AS HE HAD BEEN ON THE CYPRUS QUESTION. HE SAID HE HAD
FOUND CAGLAYANGIL FRIENDLY AND CONSTRUCTIVE ONCE AGAIN
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AND ASSUMED THAT CAGLAYANGIL -- WHOM HE RESPECTS AND
LIKES -- MUST ONCE AGAIN HAVE GOTTEN SUPPORT WITHIN THE
DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, AND PERHAPS THE TURKISH MILITARY AS
WELL, FOR HIS GENERAL VIEWS ABOUT RESOLVING PROBLEMS WITH
GREECE ON CYPRUS AND IN THE AEGEAN. BITSIOS NOTICED ALSO
THAT THE TURKISH OFFICIALS ACCOMPANYING CAGLAYANGIL IN
THEIR BILATERAL MEETING -- WHO IN THE PAST HAD BEEN
ARGUMENTATIVE AND SOMEWHAT STIFF -- WERE ALSO MORE CORDIAL
AND CONSTRUCTIVE IN THEIR COMMENTS. BITSIOS, WHO IS
INCAPABLE OF EUPHORIA -- AND IS NOT INFREQUENTLY DOUR, CRITICAL AND
COMPLAINING -- WAS ABOUT AS HAPPY AND ENCOURAGED ABOUT
GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AS I HAVE SEEN HIM SINCE HE
BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER A YEAR AGO.
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